

Appendix D

Characteristics of Insurgency

D-1. This appendix follows the discussion in Chapter 3 concerning the nature of insurgency. It provides a basis for analyzing an insurgency by discussing common elements or characteristics. Analyzing these elements helps reveal the insurgency's strengths and weaknesses. This framework can be used whether supporting or opposing the insurgency. Although military planners examine these factors separately, they must understand how the factors interact to fully understand the insurgency. This appendix is a conceptual tool to aid in understanding insurgency; it should be used with the process described in FM 2-91.1.

D-2. Seven elements common to all insurgencies exist: leadership, ideology, objectives, environment and geography, external support, phasing and timing, and organizational and operational patterns. Although they can be examined separately, one must understand how they interact to fully understand the insurgency.

LEADERSHIP

D-3. Insurgency is not simply random political violence; it is directed and focused political violence. It requires leadership to provide vision, direction, guidance, coordination, and organized coherence. Leaders of the insurgency must make their cause known to the people and the government to establish their movement's credibility. They must replace the government's legitimacy with that of their own. Their education, background, family, social connections, and experiences shape how they think and how they will fulfill their goals. These factors also help shape their approach to problem solving.

D-4. Leadership is both a function of organization and personality. Some organizations depend on a charismatic personality to provide cohesion, motivation, and a rallying point for the movement. Organizations led this way can produce decisions and initiate new actions rapidly but are vulnerable to disruptions if key personalities are removed or co-opted. Other organizations de-emphasize individual personalities and provide for redundancy and replacement in decision making. These mechanisms produce collective power and do not depend on specific leaders or personalities to be effective. They are easier to penetrate but more resistant to change. The three types of leaders are—

CONTENTS			
Leadership	D-1	Phase I: Preinsurgency	D-5
Ideology	D-2	Phase II: Organization	D-6
Objectives	D-3	Phase III: Guerilla Warfare	D-6
Environment and Geography	D-3	Phase IV: Conventional Warfare.....	D-6
External Support	D-5	Phase V: Postinsurgency	D-6
Phasing and Timing	D-5	Organizational and Operational Patterns ..	D-6

- **Single person.** The leader may centralize power or decentralize decision making and execution, leaving decision making and execution to subordinates.
- **Single group or party.** The group or party may be headed by a single person or have a ruling council which makes and executes policy. The group or party may also control other groups involved in the insurgency.
- **Group of groups.** Different groups that have different concepts of how the country should be governed make up the leadership. Their single unifying characteristic may be their opposition to the government. They compete with each other as well as with the government.

IDEOLOGY

D-5. To win, the insurgency must have a program that explains society's ills and justifies its insurgent actions. It must promise great improvements after overthrowing the government. The insurgency uses ideology to offer society a goal. The insurgents often express this goal in simple terms for ease of focus. Future plans of the insurgency must be vague enough for broad appeal and specific enough to address important issues.

D-6. The ideology of groups within the movement may indicate differing views of strategic objectives. Groups may have ideological conflicts that they need to resolve before an opponent can capitalize on them. Ideology may suggest objectives and tactics. It greatly influences the insurgent's perception of his environment. This perception of the environment then shapes the movement's organization and operational methods. Some ideologies include—

- **Communism.** Communism advocates state ownership of the means of production and common sharing of labor and products.
- **Socialism.** Socialism (in Marxist theory) is the partial implementation of communism in which the state owns and controls some of the means of production and distribution of capital, land, and other items.
- **Capitalism.** Capitalism is an economic system marked by open competition in a free market in which the means of production and distribution are privately or corporately owned.
- **Religious government.** This government is a system advocating that government and society be structured around a particular set of religious beliefs. It may take many forms including Christianity, Judaism, or Islam.
- **Ethnic nationalism.** This system advocates that the nation be structured around a particular ethnic group.
- **Democracy.** Democracy is a form of government where people exercise control directly or through elected representatives.
- **No clear ideology.** This system has an ideology that is incongruent or not identifiable. It may be purposely vague to allow maximum flexibility. Real ideology may form after the insurgents gain power. In these cases, their single goal may be to rid themselves of the existing government.

OBJECTIVES

D-7. Effective analysis of an insurgency requires interpreting strategic, operational, and tactical objectives. The strategic objective is the insurgent's desired end state; that is, how the insurgent will use the power once he has it. Replacing the government in power is only one step along this path; however, it will likely be the initial focus of efforts. Typically, the strategic objective is critical to cohesion among insurgent groups. It may be the only clearly defined goal the movement presents. The four examples of characterizations of strategic objectives are—

- The revolutionary tries to overthrow the existing power structure.
- The secessionist tries to escape from existing system.
- The restorational tries to return to a “golden age,” restore a previous system of rule, or resist change.
- The reformist tries to change the government policies without its overthrow.

D-8. Objectives can be either operational or tactical. Operational objectives are those that insurgents pursue as part of the overall process of destroying government legitimacy and progressively establishing their desired end state. Tactical objectives are the immediate aims of insurgent acts, such as disseminating psychological operations products or the attack and seizure of a key facility. These actions accomplish tactical objectives that lead to operational goals. Tactical objectives can be psychological as well as physical in nature. For example, legitimacy is the center of gravity for both the insurgents and the counterinsurgents. Legitimacy is largely a product of perception; consequently, it can be the principle consideration in the selection and attainment of tactical objectives.

ENVIRONMENT AND GEOGRAPHY

D-9. Environment and geography, including cultural and demographic factors, affect all participants in a conflict. How insurgents and counterinsurgents adapt to these realities creates advantages and disadvantages for each. The effects of the environment and geography are most visible at the tactical level where the predominant influence on decisions regarding force structure; doctrine; and tactics, techniques, and procedures may exist.

D-10. Civil affairs (CA) forces have a regional focus, coupled with specific cultural awareness, that ensures relevant support to the commander. The G5/S5 and CA staff provide the commander with an area study and assessment (see FM 3-57) that includes—

- Geography, to include physical features, climate, and political geography.
- History.
- People, including demographics, religions, languages, and culture and social structure.
- Host-nation support.
- Legal and administrative systems of the host nation.

D-11. Identifying the significant characteristics of the battlefield environment helps establish the geographical limits of the area of interest and directs the

analytical efforts in steps 2 and 3 of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) process. (See Figure D-1.) Defining the area of interest also identifies gaps in the common understanding of the battlefield, serving as a guide to the type of intelligence and information required in refining the IPB process. In defining the area of interest, analysts may examine—

- Strategic location, to include neighboring countries' boundaries.
- Lines of communications, to include railways, roadways, waterways, pipelines, harbors and ports, and airports.
- Insurgent use of communication systems, to include television stations, telephone systems, cellular phone systems, radio stations, and the Internet.
- Areas and bases used by insurgents for logistics, training, operations, refuge, or illicit drug activities.
- Insurgent operational activities in the area of interest, to include locations for ambushes, roadblocks, kidnappings, sabotage, demonstrations, crimes, meetings, linkup, and surveillance.
- Insurgent support functions in the area of interest, to include logistics routes, cache sites, water sources, fuel storage, and production areas.
- Areas of pro-insurgent population, to include individual villages, cities, and rural areas; areas of insurgent influence; areas of insurgent control; residences of insurgent leadership; and key sympathizers.

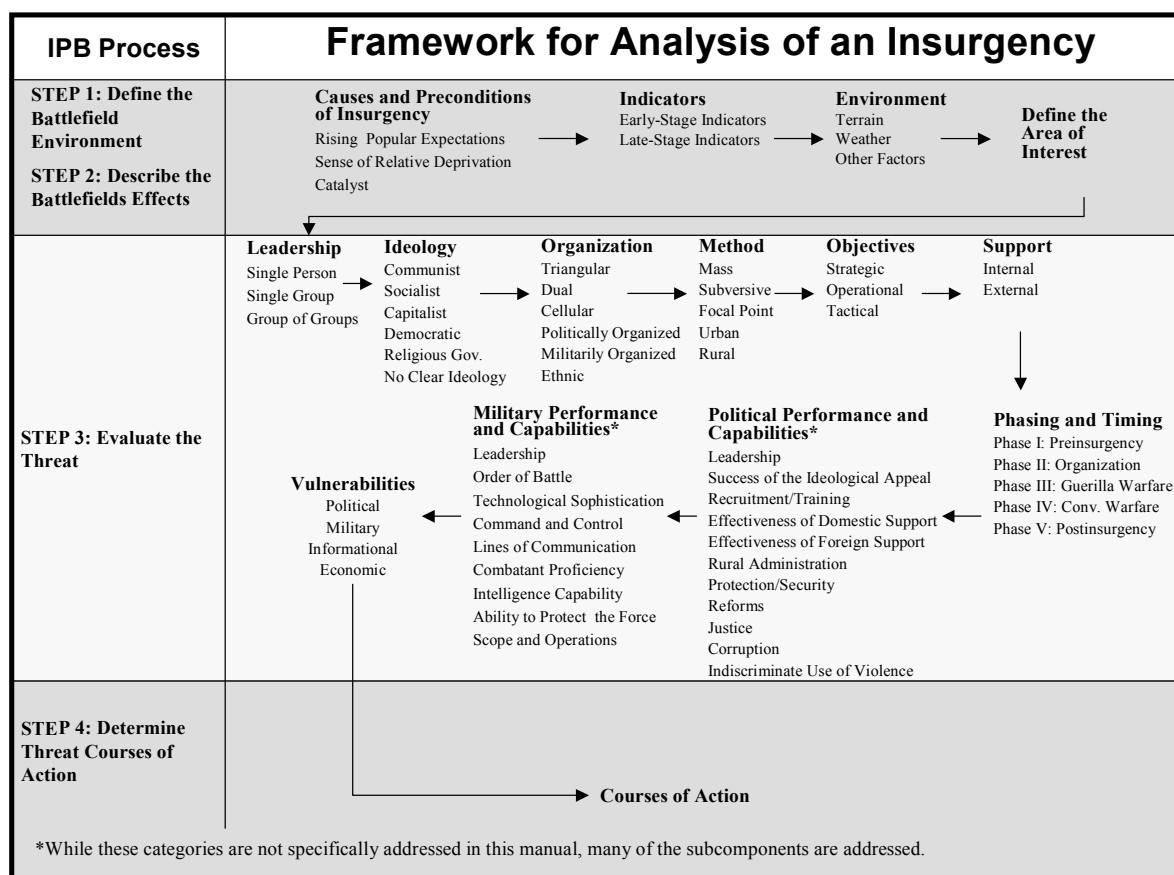


Figure D-1. Integrating the Framework for Analysis During the IPB

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

D-12. Historically, some insurgencies have done well without external support. However, recent examples, such as Vietnam and Nicaragua, show that external support can accelerate events and influence the final outcome. External support can provide political, psychological, and material resources that might otherwise be limited or unavailable. Four main types of external support exist:

- **Moral support** is the acknowledgement of the insurgent as just and admirable.
- **Political support** is the active promotion of insurgents' strategic goals in international forums.
- **Resource support** is the money, weapons, food, advisors, and training.
- **Sanctuary support** is the secure training plus operational and logistic bases.

D-13. Accepting external support can affect the legitimacy of both insurgents and counterinsurgents. It implies the inability to sustain oneself. In addition, the country or group providing support attaches its legitimacy along with the insurgent or the counterinsurgent group it supports. The consequences can affect programs in the supporting nation wholly unrelated to the insurgent situation.

PHASING AND TIMING

D-14. Successful insurgencies pass through common phases of development. Not all insurgencies experience every phase, and progression through all phases is certainly not a requirement for success. The same insurgent movement may be in another phase in other regions of a country. Successful insurgencies can also revert to an earlier phase when under pressure, resuming development when favorable conditions return.

D-15. Some insurgencies depend on proper timing for their success. Because of their limited support, their success depends on weakening the government's legitimacy so that it becomes ineffective. Then, an opportunity to seize power exists. When these insurgencies move to seize power, they expose their organization and intentions. If they move too early or too late, the government may discover their organization and destroy it. The five phases of insurgency are preinsurgency, organization, guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, and postinsurgency.

PHASE I: PREINSURGENCY

D-16. The characteristics of preinsurgency are—

- Indicators of insurgency are present.
- Preconditions of insurgency are aggravated.
- Leadership emerges in response to domestic grievances or outside influences.
- A catalyst triggers insurgency to organize.

PHASE II: ORGANIZATION

D-17. The characteristics of organization are—

- The insurgency establishes and expands its organization and ideology.
- A popular front is established with other antigovernment groups.
- Antigovernment activity, such as strikes and demonstrations, is initiated.
- Taxation and theft are used to raise funds.
- Education begins of the populace in the insurgency's ideology.
- Small, local guerilla bands are organized; small-scale guerilla activities are begun.
- Terrorism begins to intimidate government officials and hostile members of the population.

PHASE III: GUERRILLA WARFARE

D-18. The characteristics of guerrilla warfare are—

- Increased scale of guerilla attacks.
- Increased use of sabotage and terrorism.
- Propaganda intensifies.
- Insurgents gain control of geographic areas and develop bases for further operations.
- Government officials are driven out of local areas.
- Shadow governments may be established.
- International recognition and support are sought.

PHASE IV: CONVENTIONAL WARFARE

D-19. The characteristics of conventional warfare are—

- Guerilla bands combine to form battalions, regiments, and higher echelons of regular forces.
- More powerful and sophisticated weapons are acquired through foreign assistance or battlefield capture.
- Government forces are challenged directly in battle.
- Areas of insurgent control expand; political activity increases.

PHASE V: POSTINSURGENCY

D-20. The characteristics of postinsurgency are—

- Government is overthrown or it satisfies the insurgent's demands.
- Struggle for political leadership exists between the competing groups.
- New governmental system is established in which the leadership of the insurgency may or may not head.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL PATTERNS

D-21. Insurgencies develop organizational and operational patterns from the interaction of many factors. As a result, each insurgency organization is unique. However, knowing the commonly accepted general patterns or strategies of insurgency helps in predicting the tactics and techniques that

may be employed against the supported government. The types of organization are—

- **Triangular.** This organization is composed of three elements: the political party, the popular control mechanism, and the military organization. Leadership of each element is distinct, with the political element in authority.
- **Dual.** A legal overt political party controls the activity of an illegal covert military organization.
- **Cellular.** Small, decentralized groups operate independently of each other. A cellular organization may be combined with any of the other organizational structures to enhance security.
- **Political.** Extensive complex political structure develops before military actions are initiated.
- **Military.** Armed insurgents serve as a catalyst for mobilizing opposition against existing regime.
- **Ethnic.** This organization is organized along ethnic, tribal, or religious lines. It has a perception that government has denied rights of their group.

D-22. Five patterns, or strategies, of insurgency exist—

- **Mass.** This pattern involves a large popular movement, elements of which operate outside the existing system. It involves active and passive popular supporters. It establishes a rival government. Mass uses well-devised ideology and propaganda. It employs regular and guerrilla forces.
- **Focal point.** This pattern's efforts are directed by a small group that uses violence to overturn an existing regime.
- **Subversive.** This pattern uses the political process to place insurgents in positions of authority by election or appointment. The overt element influences public opinion and obstructs the government. The covert element employs terrorism, coercion, and intimidation.
- **Urban.** Insurgents gain control of the cities and move outward. Its efforts focus on disrupting utilities and services, planning mass demonstrations, using overt and covert communication facilities, and discrediting the government. It takes advantage of ease of movement. Urban-based insurgency works best in a centralized society.
- **Rural.** This pattern mobilizes the population of the countryside. The peasant army eventually surrounds the cities, isolates government forces, and brings down the government. Rural-based insurgency works best in a decentralized society.